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votes as these, rests not only lasting disgrace, but the heavy burden of responsibility for promoting that delusion in the South which led them to fancy that the nation was already lost to all sense of dignity and honor, and would consent to be broken up without resistance. These men were the Northern agents of secession, the real promoters and fosterers of war. God be thanked that the people had not sunk so low as to follow their counsels or adopt their policy.

The majority report of the committee, after undergoing some amendment, was finally adopted by the Conference on the 27th of February, and the Conference adjourned. Its recommendations were not acted upon by Congress, and, as we have said, no distinct influence upon public action or opinion is to be ascribed to its proceedings.

We cannot too highly commend Mr. Chittenden's excellent Report of the Debates. His work is executed in a very able and satisfactory manner; and it is fortunate that, as the Convention refused to employ a competent stenographer for the purpose, so careful, thorough, and complete a Report was made by one of its own members.

2.—*History of the Anti-Slavery Measures of the Thirty-seventh and Thirty-eighth United States Congresses, 1861–64.* By HENRY WILSON. Boston: Walker, Wise, and Company. 1864. 12mo. pp. xv., 384.

SENATOR WILSON has added another to his many good services to the nation and to the cause of freedom, by the preparation and publication of this volume. The rapid succession, during the last three or four years, of military events of the utmost interest and importance, has, in some measure, drawn away the public regard from the less striking, but not less important, legislative events of the period. Such a record as is here presented of Congressional debate and action is well fitted to arrest attention, and to show the great progress that has been made in rendering the laws of the country consistent with the principles upon which its institutions are founded. While Mr. Chittenden's volume, which we have just noticed, contains the report of the last declarations and efforts of the supporters of slavery, by which the legislation of Congress had for two generations at least been mainly directed, this volume, with a striking contrast, offers to view the first successful efforts of the defenders of the rights of man and of free labor to put an end to slavery, and to destroy that power which, after long degrading the country, finally sought to ruin the government which it had been accustomed to control.

The Thirty-seventh Congress, the first session of which was held on

July 4, 1861, will have a place in our history inferior to that of no other Congress. Its members represented twenty-five States; and though a large majority of them were worthy representatives of the patriotism and spirit of the loyal North, and were possessed with the deepest aversion to slavery, there was a not inconsiderable minority who were not only opposed to the Administration, but held opinions in respect to the war and to slavery more conformed to those of the Rebels than to those of true lovers of the Union. The questions which were forced upon this Congress, by the condition of the nation, for discussion and decision, were of a novelty and importance beyond all precedent. They related not only to the carrying on of a civil war of unparalleled magnitude, not only to the maintenance of the government against a Rebellion, the nature and proportions of which were of the most alarming character, but also to the principles upon which the whole political fabric rested, and to the measures requisite for the future security, peace, and prosperity of the nation.

To deal successfully with these various questions called for a statesmanship that should be calm in a period of storm, foreseeing in the midst of perplexities and obscurities, steady in the midst of alarms. And although there were no men in either branch of Congress who would, by general consent, be numbered among the rare statesmen of genius who are endowed with commanding power of intellect and strength of personal character, yet the proceedings of this Congress give evidence of a very high degree of legislative judgment and capacity among its members. Politics had become more distinctly a branch of morals than in common times. Moral principles were involved in political action, and afforded a safe and intelligible test of its character. At such a period, when events have roused the moral energies and touched the conscience of a people, great acts may be accomplished by men not great in themselves, but lifted to a noble height by the wave of popular emotion. Great statesmanship may be exhibited by those who are not great statesmen.

The Congress had much to learn before it advanced with that vigorous course of legislation by which its memory will be perpetuated. Its first steps were timid and irresolute. As it gained experience, and was instructed by the lessons of the war, the moral convictions of its members invigorated their political action, and were embodied in a series of practical measures of a far-reaching and decisive character.

Senator Wilson's volume is concerned with those measures alone that relate to slavery. In this field the Thirty-seventh Congress accomplished an extraordinary work. The most important of its enactments for freedom was the prohibition of slavery in all the territories of the

United States. This was the true healing of the nation. The old quarrel could be closed only in this way; any other settlement would but have smothered, not quenched, its fires. This provision for freedom was accompanied by legislation directly against slavery. Slavery was no longer to shelter itself under the national flag. An act was passed, by which the slaves in the District of Columbia were emancipated, and slave-holding in the national capital made forever impossible. The Congress, moreover, enacted that all slaves used for military purposes by the Rebels should be forever free. It pledged the faith of the nation to aid loyal States to emancipate the slaves therein. It authorized the employment of persons of African descent in the military service. It passed the laws necessary to carry into effect the treaty with Great Britain, concerning the suppression of the slave-trade. It provided for the enrolment and drafting of black men as well as white, the law having previously excluded the black from the privilege of enrolment and service in the militia. It began the work of making the laws of the country in respect to persons consistent with the intention of the Constitution, and worthy of a free people. And these are only a portion of the Anti-Slavery measures enacted by this memorable Congress. The work thus begun was carried forward by the Thirty-eighth Congress. Its details are to be found in the book before us. They deserve to be studied by every one who desires to comprehend the inevitable necessity of the revolution through which we are now passing for the preservation of all that makes the national institutions dear and precious and inspiring, or who would understand the actual nature of the new era of the Republic.

Something yet remains to be done; and the Thirty-eighth Congress, now assembled for its last session, has the opportunity to consummate the crowning act, by which the nation shall be wholly redeemed to freedom and to peace, and by which, at length, the contradiction between its principles and its conduct shall be abolished. If the House of Representatives passes the joint resolution submitting to the people an amendment to the Constitution prohibiting slavery in the United States, it will have done all in its power to remove forever the great cause of dissension and the only source of civil war. Freedom will be the forerunner of peace, and the cement of Union. The question now rests with the opposition members of the House of Representatives, whether the honor of this measure shall belong to the Thirty-eighth or to the Thirty-ninth Congress; for the recent elections have rendered it almost certain that the next Congress will pass this measure, if the present does not. The people have declared their will, and it remains for Congress to execute it. So much has been gained through war.

Senator Wilson's volume has a personal interest in addition to its historical value. It is the monument of his own sincere allegiance to the cause which is now triumphant, through a period when loyalty to freedom and to the nation meant readiness to bear the trial of injustice, obloquy, and misinterpretation for their sake.

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3. — *The Political History of the United States of America during the Great Rebellion, from November 6, 1860, to July 4, 1864, including a Classified Summary of the Legislation of the Second Session of the Thirty-sixth Congress, the Three Sessions of the Thirty-seventh Congress, the First Session of the Thirty-eighth Congress, with the Votes thereon, and the important Executive, Judicial, and Politico-Military Facts of that eventful Period, together with the Organization, Legislation, and General Proceedings of the Rebel Administration.* By EDWARD MCPHERSON, of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Clerk of the House of Representatives of the United States. Washington, D. C.: Philp and Solomons. 1864. 8vo. pp. viii., 440.

THIS volume is a compilation of documents illustrative of the history of the United States from 1860 to 1864. It is of great value for reference and consultation, for it contains a vast mass of material, judiciously selected, compactly arranged, and conveniently classified, carefully printed, and provided with a lucid table of contents and a good index. It is fitted to be of service to the politician and to the historical student, and it will be found a desirable, almost an indispensable, supplement to the methodical histories of the Rebellion. It affords the means of authenticating statements concerning policy and opinion, as well as of tracing the course of the most important acts of administration and of legislation.

No one can study this volume without being forcibly impressed, by the cumulative evidence it presents, with the intelligence, the self-possession, and the spirit which the people have manifested during the Rebellion, with the integrity and capacity of the administration, with the inherent force and vigor of our institutions, and with the transcendent importance of the principles involved in our struggle for union, freedom, and law. As time goes on, and the nature of our contest becomes more clearly manifest and better understood, the interest of the documents contained in this work will become greater and more general. They will take their place among the most important documents of all history.

We would suggest to Mr. McPherson, that his book would be improved by the addition of a brief chronological table of the events of the